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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001316

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR NEA/NGA AND EUR/SE; BAGHDAD ALSO FOR CJTF-7

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/03/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [MARR](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKOMAN BOOKS SEIZED AT IRAQ-TURKEY BORDER - KDP  
CLAIMS INFLAMMATORY CONTENT; TURKS SAY KDP HAS NO RIGHT TO  
SEIZE THE BOOKS

REF: COHEN-REMLER-ROLLINSON E-MAILS OF MARCH 2-4

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons 1.4 b and d.

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Summary  
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1. (C) On March 2, the Turkish MFA informed Post that a shipment of 8,000 books in Arabic being sent to Turkmen in Kirkuk by the Turkoman Cooperation and Cultural Foundation were seized and the Turkish citizen drivers of the trucks carrying the books detained by KDP officials at the Ibrahim Khalil border gate on Feb. 29. The trucks, drivers and books were then taken to Dohuk. The Turkish MFA asked us to seek the driver's release, and assure that the books were sent on to Kirkuk. The drivers and trucks were released March 2, but the KDP will not release the books. Emboff was called into the MFA March 3 where MFA Iraq Dept. Head Serra Erarslan complained about the incident and stated that Turkey does not believe the KDP has any authority to seize printed material being sent from Turkey to Iraq. She said the action was not taken in the context of a legal action, and that the GOT felt it had nowhere to turn in cases like this but to the US Embassy. When we pointed out that Turkey regularly seized printed material coming to Turkey from Iraq that the Turks considered inflammatory, she objected to the comparison of Turkey, a legitimate state, with the KDP, a party operating on its own authority. End Summary.

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Books Seized for Inflammatory Content  
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2. (U) An Iraqi Turkoman NGO attempted Feb. 29 to send from Turkey to Kirkuk a shipment of 8,000 books in Arabic, written by the head of the Turkoman Cooperation and Cultural Foundation entitled Turkmen in Iraq and Human Rights. The Iraqi Kurds at the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing seized the books and arrested the truck drivers, claiming the books were inflammatory, giving false reports of Kurdish massacres of Iraqi Turkmen in northern Iraq, claiming the KDP had wronged the Iraqi Turkmen, and libeling KDP leader Masoud Barzani. The Turkish drivers and their trucks were released at 1830 March 2, but the KDP refuses to release the books.

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Turkish MFA Protests Seizure  
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3. (C) On March 3, Emboff was called into the MFA by Iraq Department Head Serra Erarslan, who gave Emboff a copy of the book. She said that the GOT felt it had nowhere to turn in cases like this. The Turks call the US Embassy, but the USG did not seize the books and was not likely to get them released. Turkey, she said, does not recognize the KDP as having any legitimate authority to take legal actions such as confiscating books or determining what printed material is acceptable. She noted that the Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) would have provisions for free press and free speech, but feared that it would leave the KDP in charge of the border with Turkey and leave interpretations of the application of TAL provisions for free speech and press up to the KDP's discretion. "Barzani will act like a king" and decide whether or not to use the law, she said. Western standards that the US hoped to introduce in Iraq via the TAL, she said, were unlikely to be respected

4. (C) Emboff noted to her that neither she nor he knew what the book actually said (as neither read Arabic) and that the matter begged a legal determination of whether the content

was indeed inflammatory. At this, Erarslan replied that the Iraqi Kurds publish maps that show large areas of Turkey as belonging to Kurdistan. Emboff pointed out that Turkish authorities do not let such material cross the border into Turkey. Erarslan objected to the comparison of Turkey, a sovereign state governed by the rule of law, and the KDP. She said there could be no notion of reciprocity in cases like this. We undertook to convey her concerns to Washington and Baghdad.

15. (C) Comment: Strong aversion among Turkish officials to recognize the KDP as a legitimate governing authority in northern Iraq, regardless of the TAL, will continue to complicate customs and other border issues between Iraq and Turkey for the foreseeable future. The level of dislike and distrust -- on both sides -- should not be underestimated. Until June 30, the USG provides a buffer or mediator of sorts in disputes like this one. The difficulties may well escalate after June 30, unless there is more evident authority exerted by Baghdad over immigration and customs affairs at the border. End comment.

16. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.  
EDELMAN